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PAPERS RELATING TO THE FOUNDING BY THE "SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPELS IN FOREIGN PARTS," LONDON, OF THE MISSIONS AT READING AND MORLATTAN, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

CONTRIBUTED BY B. F. OWEN.

(Concluded from page 382.)

READING 25 June 1765

REV^D SIR.

I was honoured wth your Favours of June last, & communicated the Contents to my Parishioners which has produced the effects set forth on their Petitions herewith transmitted, by which you'll be pleased to find they have at last Resolved to provide Churches & to Increase my Salary when they are finished. . . .

This Town has a promising prospect of Thriving now that it is Recovering fast from the Ruins of an Indian war which almost from its beginning has lain hard & nigh upon it. And for Health, Pleasantness & Convenience for Trade there is no Inland Town perhaps in America equal to it. And that it will deserve the very particular care of the Society to have our Church established upon some firm Foundation in it; I doubt not in the least & wherein my warmest tho' weak Endeavours can be subservient so desirable & necessary an End I trust they shall never be wanting.

The sooner you can Return an answer to the Petitions from this Mission, it will be ye more agreeable, as the people will do little in the State of Suspense they are till then, when I hope they shall find Encouragement to proceed Unanimously in their Undertakings. The Proprietors of this Province have given orders to Grant a Lot of

Ground in this Town for building an Episcopal Church when desired, & one Mr. Jones is to grant for its use forever five Acres of Land about two miles Distance from Town, which tho' of little value just now, may yield something sometime hence.

That I may, in some Measure, merit the approbation of the Venerable Society, & ye people committed to my care is my most hearty desire.

I am most Respectfully Revd Sir
Your most Obliged & very hum^l Servt
ALEX^R MURRAY.

The REV DR BURTON.

PHILADELPHIA 8 January 1768.

REVEREND SIR,

Sir William Johnson it seems, has for some time expected two Clergymen from ye Society for the proposed Mission at Johnson hall & Schenectady, but having no accounts of any being ever yet appointed, as appears by some letters of his lately to Dr Smith & Mr. Barton, wherein he signifies that "if they cannot be got soon, they will come too late": Accordingly they have been pleased to Recommend me to him for one of the Missions in case ye Encouragement is suitable and to this they expect a particular answer from Sir William after he has communed w^t ye people concerned in these Missions, that there may be no mistakes in the Outsetting, which are too common in this part of ye World, & breed such uneasiness afterwards as defeats ye great end of a Mission; so that one can hardly be too careful in fixing his Terms if he reasonably hopes to continue long in one place & be useful in his holy calling; which in prudence, should be as far removed as possible from all occasions of dispute & discontent upon account of Salary or such like temporal considerations, especially amidst the Great Body of Dissenters in America.

Should Sir William then settle the Preliminary Article to ye peoples Satisfaction & mine I would be glad to know whether it would be agreeable to ye Society that I should

remove from Reading to either of these New Missions, they have been so indulgent formerly to promise me a Removal to some more Encouraging place, & as I have reason to believe that Sir William will settle every thing to my mind, I hope they will in that event appoint my Translation. This application may be thought premature, but the design of it is to prevent farther loss of time in having these places supplied & as Sir William has them so much at heart, & is so warm a Friend to ye Church, it were a pity his Expectations should be disappointed, therefore allow me to crave an Answer with all convenient speed. Should I settle at one of these places I would strive to supply the other occasionally till a fit person for it was got. Upon Receipt of Sir William's Answer to the Revd Dr Smith upon this Subject I'll immediately determine on accepting or not, & shall not fail to write you again accordingly. Submitting the whole to the Society's Judgment, I am wth all deference Revd Sir

Your most obliged & very affe^{tt} Brother
& humble Servt

ALEX^{R} MURRAY.

The REV^{D} DR BURTON.

READING 25 Sepr 1768

REV^{D} SIR

About three weeks ago I Received your Letter of 26th March last; & in Obedience to the Society's Instructions shall lay their Proposals for Augmenting my Salary before my different Vestries once more, but I'm confident they are not able to comply wth them as the Revd Dr Smith assures me he informed you some time ago, & by whose Advice I accordingly drew my last Bill for £40.; for the Acceptance of which I offer the Society my most grateful acknowledgments, as also for their agreeing to my Removal to Johnson-hall or Schenectady; the last of which Sir William Johnson was desirous I should accept of, as he did not doubt but the people there would Contribute something handsome towards ye support of One so well Recommended by Dr Smith and Mr. Barton; But as he did not say how

much nor what Security the people would give The Doctor thought it proper to have satisfaction in these particulars & so wrote Sir William last Spring to that effect, but has never Received any Answer; Since then Sir William has been mostly from home & constantly engaged in Indian Affairs: Let me then be no hinderance to the Settlement of either of these two places. The number of my Parishioners here, & those of ye Country Church amounts to 330, & several Dissenters besides Associate wth us both on Sundays & Holy Days.

The Communicants since Christmas 1766 have increased from 6 to 14; & accordingly I now dispense the Eucharist thrice a year on the principal Festivals. Since then also I have Baptized 25 Children & 4 Adult persons, and have at last established the practice of catechizing the younger people after the Sermon in Church, which excites in them a Commendable Emulation, improves ye Hearers in General, & stimulates ye Parents & Schoolmasters in particular to double y^r^ diligence in a Course of private Instruction. Hence all concerned strive to obtain ye public Approbation & escape public Censure. Each Class have y^r^ Task Assigned them from time to time, wth a Repitition of all ye Catechetic Exercises at stated Seasons. This method I trust in God will make some lasting Impressions of Christian Knowledge upon their tender minds; & ye Older people are indeed so very Ignorant that there is hardly any other way they can bear to be instructed in, but this thro' their Children & with their proficiency, to do them justice, they are much delighted; & to forward their Education I must be soon obliged to apply to the Society for some Small Tracts, of which I shall send you a List.

What Relates to the providing a Church a Parsonage house & Glebe here, I can just now say little about, till I can have a full Meeting of both Vestries, who must soon enquire into the State of the Lottery which was drawn last year for Building some Churches here & in other parts of this province; and at same time I shall modestly intimate

the Proposals for Increasing my Salary, & in the Interim only draw for the sum originally granted me.

I hope the Venerable Society will believe that I use my best Endeavours to promote the pious Ends of my Mission, notwithstanding of all the Unjust & Ungenerous Animadversions which are now a throwing out from ye Printing-press against our Church & Clergy, by her Old Inveterate adversaries the Oliverian Independants, & a Sect of High-flying Presbyterians, who dread Bishops in America because the fast Friends of Monarchy & Subordination, as their Fathers felt about a Century past; but let me forbear at present, & subscribe myself

Revd Sir
Your most affectionate Brother
& very humble Servant
ALEX^R^ MURRAY.

The REV^D^ DR BURTON.

READING 28 March 1771

REVEREND SIR.

The State of my Parish is chiefly the same that it was last year I wrote you, on the Number of Communicants are increased to 22 . . . The Number of my Parishioners are 325 of which I baptized 7 Children & 5 besides from the upper Parts of Philadelphia & Chester Counties. As to the building of a Church here, we have but lately Received the last part of the Lottery money that fell to the share of this place, & the First part, which was lent on Interest, till the whole should be got, is to be immediately demanded, that we may buy materials this year to be in Readiness to build the next at farthest. The Lottery money wth Interest amounts to £271.10. of our Currency. There was £40. besides which fell to St. Gabriel's Church at Molatton; this is already applied towards repairing the same. . . .

Reverend Sir
Your most obliged &
Very humble Servt
ALEX^R^ MURRAY.

REV^D^ DR BURTON.

READING 26 March 1772.

REVEREND SIR,

I have hardly anything new to communicate concerning my Parishioners: They continue Orderly & Quiet, amidst the Clamor & Noise Contention & Evil speaking of the German Colonists, who are the Body of the people in this Frontier County, & are every now & then at Variance with one another or with their ministers; to the Great Scandal of Religion, & their Various Professions, which are chiefly Lutheran and Calvanist, & are both equally distant from our Church; the Former as well as the Latter admitting Presbyterian Ordination, & both use Organs, Violins & ye Like in their Worship. The Lutherans of this Town are just now a Suing & Execrating one another on the Occasion of Electing a minister & this satisfaction they frequently indulge themselves, being fonder of New Clergy than New Clothes, which they are Parsimonious enough to wear Threadbare, & when they are Ripe for a Change of Pastors, they make them do so too, & so starve them out of place with Cold or Hunger. Their Subscriptions are scanty at Best, & these may Continue or withhold annually at pleasure; for in their Language they *Hire* a Minister generally for no longer than a year, which renders his Office as Contemptible as Poor. Their Elections are like Polish Diets; they meet again & again, & as often dissolve in Confusion, till at last tired out, they submit to any Measure or any Minister for a Time, which makes ye Settlements short lived & Unsatisfying & Vacancies long. These sad Effects of Anarchy too evidently shew the necessity of some Ecclesiastical Government in these parts of ye World. Must not Christianity in such circumstances suffer in the Eyes of the Heathen, whose Morals it should mend, not Corrupt? Besides the Members of our own Church are no more than Men, & may be brought to think the more Lightly of Religion & its Ministers; especially in those places where they are comparatively but a small number. Has France or Spain, Russia or Turkey left their Religions in such a Distracted State as ours in British

America? I address a Wise & Zealous Advocate for an American Episcopate; "Judge you what I say."

I expect we shall be in condition next Summer to Build a Church here which is much wanted. The Number of my Parishioners are 307, of whom 22 are Communicants. I have baptized last year 20 Children, 7 of whom belonged to one Family in Chester County. . . . I am with all due Respect

Reverend Sir
Your most obliged hum[l] Serv[t]
ALEX MURRAY.

REV. D[R] BURTON.

READING 26 March 1774.

REVEREND SIR.

This District of my Mission still feels the Loss it sustained last Year by the Death of some of its Principal Members: However the Remaining few are desirous to do their Best to get a Church built, & have exchanged the Lot of Ground. The Proprietaries of the Province had allowed them in Town for another much more convenient, but £115. dearer than that, which makes them put off Building till next Year, that they can collect as much Money as will defray Additional Expence. The number here Old & Young, is only 127, but they are an Orderly well disposed people; as those truely are in the Country District of Molatton, who are 170 in all. These have repaired their Old Church, and are very constant Attenders of it.

The Communicants in both Parishes are 19. The Children I Baptized last year are 15. . . .

I am with all Respect
Reverend Sir
Your most obliged & very
humble Servant
ALEX[R] MURRAY

REV. D[R] DANIEL BURTON.